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Social networking: Implications for education

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In this issue...

Letter to the Editor

Remembering Brian D. Hannaford B.Sc., FACE, AM

In the light of the interview with ACE National Chair, Bob Lingard in the February 2012 issue of *Professional Educator*, [Volume 11 Issue,] it is time to acknowledge the work of Brian Hannaford, Principal of Marion High School from 1974–1983. He died in February 2012 after a long and distinguished career.

Talking about accountability Professor Lingard said in the interview in *Professional Educator*: 'I think all of the accountability pressures on all the sectors and levels of education now are quite reductive and this pushes us to questions of what are the purposes of education and how can we develop rich forms of accountability, which don't only work through metrics and test results, but also use narratives as well as numbers to provide accounts of the achievement of schools in respect of their broader purposes, [p, 20]'

Brian Hannaford, one of Australia's finest principals, knew otherwise. 'Educational opportunities require connections of all kinds.' Reductive approaches decrease opportunities for learning. Brian Hannaford had known what it meant for students to feel deprived when he was the Principal of Elizabeth West High School. He carried that recognition of the destructive result of feelings of deprivation with him when he came to Marion High School and made this a 'lighthouse' secondary school for Australia.

Erica Jolly MACE South Australia

An article by Erica Jolly describing the work of Brian Hannaford can be read on the ACE website at: www.austcolled.com.au/article/remembering-brian-d-hannaford-bsc-face-am

New technology in the classroom

Professor Robert Lingard PhD FASSA
National Chair

Social networking is also linked to the constitution of student identities and also has some democratic potential; think of the so-called 'Arab Spring'.

From the introduction of calculators to mathematics lessons to students and teachers on Facebook or using iPads; the use of technology in the classroom has always been controversial. Each new innovation is met with a wide range of reactions from being proclaimed as the 'next big thing' in teaching and learning to being dismissed as a passing fad or distraction.

One debate currently raging in Australian education is the place of social networking programs such as Facebook in our schools. Some educators urge us to embrace the new technology, while others shy away from the risks of distraction, disengagement or bullying. In this edition of *Professional Educator* we examine just a few of the issues surrounding the use of social networking and mobile devices in teaching and learning.

As you will see, our contributors have different views on the use of social networking and teaching with technology. However, some consistent themes emerge from the articles. The articles indicate that appropriate use of social media in the classroom can lead to positive learning outcomes for students. On the other hand, inappropriate use is associated with distractedness and decreased student performance.

Further research into this emerging area will be required. The need for ongoing professional development for teachers in the use of social networking is already apparent. As Gerald White points out in his review of the research, 'the appropriate use of social networking for learning will not occur without teacher-led programs in schools, training colleges and universities.'

Historically, the 'technology' of the book ensured a particular pedagogy in schools, one focused on teachers 'delivering' to students. There were, of course, many variants on this approach from teacher-centred to child-centred. In a sense, we might see this approach as 'pedagogy of containment', located within classrooms and directed by the teacher as the sole source of knowledge. What the new technologies potentially do, it seems to me, is open up schools and classrooms to the broader world around them, challenging a 'pedagogy of containment'. This might be very appropriate for preparing young people for the globalised world in which we live today and one in which new technologies play a most significant role.

We also need to acknowledge how the new technologies reconstitute some of the perennial problems facing schools and in respect of student behaviour issues; for example, in relation to bullying; this unacceptable practice is today often mediated by new technologies. Social networking is also linked to the constitution of student identities and also has some democratic potential; think of the so-called 'Arab Spring'. We also need to recognise that some schools see the world today as being so saturated by the new technologies that they have constituted their schools as places that exclude these new technologies. And of course, governments often fund these new technologies in schools without adequately funding professional development for teachers and deep thinking about how the new technologies can assist us achieve high quality and equitable schooling for all young Australians in a globally connected world. There is a lot to ponder about the issue raised in this edition of the *Professional Educator*.

If you would like to share your own experiences of using social networking or mobile devices in your teaching at any level of education please tell us about it by sending an email to ace@austcolled.com.au

This is the first editorial by me as National President of ACE. Most recently these editorials have been written by the CEO. The former CEO, Debra Goldfinch resigned from that position on the 28 June and the National Board accepted her resignation from that day. As an immediate response, the Board worked with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE), The University of Melbourne to second Catherine Pickett from the MGSE as Interim CEO. Catherine is Student Centre Manager in the MGSE. I thank National President-elect, Professor Stephen Dinham for his assistance in arranging this secondment. I also sincerely thank Professor Field Rickards, Dean, Ms Jane Prior, General Manager, and Tim Brabazon, Manager, Strategy and Planning, from MGSE for their strong support of the College. We are privileged to have the University of Melbourne hosting our National Office and hope to be able to work strategically with MGSE in the future. I thank them for this support and for allowing the secondment of Catherine to the National Office. In her short time in the position, she has done a wonderful job. •

Forget the magic powers, many just aren't switched on by technology

Keith McNaught

... there seems to be a lack of willingness within the younger generation of secondary students to engage with learning management systems, and technological tools, in particular those not highly motivating and fun to use.

In 2011 I began supervising Russell, a practitioner-researcher teacher working on his Masters by Research degree. Russell is a dedicated and passionate mature age entrant to teaching, with a background in IT, who has chosen to work in one of the most disadvantaged schools in the Perth metropolitan area. Russell was motivated to use technology in teaching and learning to address the specific needs that were apparent in his professional work. He was not using IT for the more common reasons – for example, he was not responding to bureaucratic pressure to do so, nor using IT for its own sake, as though it was some magical object. Moreover, Russell, with that IT background prior to teaching, has considerable technical skills, so many of the issues faced by other teachers were nonexistent for him.

Russell decided to use microblogging, specifically Edmodo.com as a tool to support the classroom teaching of mathematics with his students. Twitter and Facebook are examples of microblogging sites, which allow a user to post a range of materials with ease, available immediately and afterwards, to their readers. Edmodo replicates a social networking site, with a wall where messages can be posted, and various files can be uploaded. Russell uploads the interactive whiteboard notes created in class, homework exercises are posted, and he makes short videos of himself teaching new topics and concepts, so students can watch these prior to, or after, lessons. He uses these videos to encourage able students to come to class 'ready to work' and able to go on with material, rather than being held back by behavioural issues from other students, a phenomenon all too common in tough schools. As Russell's students have embraced the use of microblogging, partly through his clever use of the tool (e.g. the only place to collect marks and results), their performance and engagement in classroom teaching has already increased in significant and noticeable ways - thus, his research thesis will potentially make an important contribution to this area.

Russell's work inspired us both to use microblogging, as the vehicle for his research supervision, and from that, motivated me to embed this into my own university teaching. Like Russell, I wanted to use IT to support and enhance teaching and learning, and do not consider it a panacea. This is aligned to my professional fears that too many teachers and schools are being coerced or pressured into using IT which does not improve the quality

of teaching and learning, and for which evidence of efficacy is distinctly hard to find. I remain utterly cynical where I hear of the latest iPad rollout to 4 year olds, with promises of advanced literacy and numeracy skills; again, without any evidence and defying all logic.

With different groups of students, I've piloted using Edmodo as a microblogging tool to encourage students to have both private blogs for reflective writing, and also communal spaces in which we can share information, post resources and make various electronic resources available. As much as I can see the potential, student engagement with microblogging has been disappointing. Whilst I expected them to embrace the technology, it's clear that many have lacked the skills and confidence to do so. The technical ability of supposed digital natives was clearly overestimated. Several of my 18-20 year old students were unable to sign up for an Edmodo account, and needed an appointment to see me to follow the very rudimentary steps; several openly admitted having limited IT skills. Whilst microblogging replicates the 'look and feel' of social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), there is a major difference between using such a tool for teaching and learning, rather than for social reasons. Every student who I attempted to engage with microblogging already has a Facebook account, and none describe themselves as less than regular users. Whilst higher education providers might well be encouraging staff to make greater use of this technology, in many cases the students appear reluctant to embrace the technology for educational purposes.

Russell, in his school based trial, has identified that there seems to be a lack of willingness within the younger generation of secondary students to engage with learning management systems, and technological tools, in particular those not highly motivating and fun to use. If the technology is somewhat sterile, or less interactive than the student expects, their disengagement appears rapid. Whilst my university students represent a cross section of recent secondary school experience (e.g. some used a laptop for all their secondary years, some had limited access), Russell's secondary group are provided with the government's one-to-one laptop program, and have high levels of access and connectivity.

Ubiquitous access in Australian schools is not far away, and many organisations are seeking to fill the technology access gaps that exist. There is no question that a wide range of web-based tools which are freely available or very inexpensive to purchase, can enhance teaching and learning both within the secondary classroom and also within higher education. However, these tools and technologies require staff professional development, and pilot projects to test for efficacy, value and use. There are staff in secondary schools and higher education, quite reasonably, wanting evidence that embedded IT does improve teaching and learning.

Moreover, we need to think more broadly about student engagement with technology than having simplistic ideas that if it has technology in it, that students will want to engage and also be capable of that engagement. For those of us embracing and using web-based tools, with genuine enthusiasm and interest, it's clear that many students lack interest and engagement and, equally, at least some students lack the skills to be able to use the technology. There is a challenge to implement technology in effective and useful ways but to avoid simplistic generalisations. •

Professor Keith McNaught is Director of the Academic Enabling and Support Centre, on the Fremantle campus of the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Greg Whitby with students from St Monica's

Facing up to Facebook in the classroom

Greg Whitby

The very mention of using social media in classrooms sends many the experienced and even the novice teacher running for cover amid a barrage of protests about student safety, cyber bullying or loss of control.

Prohibiting the use of social media sites may seem like an easy solution for educators and parents' concerns but all it does is force young people to look for ways around the ban, or worse, create an experience of schooling that is irrelevant to how our students live the other half of the day.

Schools don't exist in isolation. Schooling in the 21st century demands that we engage with today's tools and provide young people with a seamless experience of the world.

While it's true that one could easily wile away the hours looking at the banal, the offensive and downright bizarre on the likes of YouTube, Twitter and Facebook – you don't have to search too far to uncover some truly outstanding content for learning and teaching.

Any unfamiliar tool warrants consideration and thoughtfulness about its application and usefulness in learning and teaching. I have vivid memories of the now humble calculator causing furor in Maths faculties for fear students would fail to learn fundamental numeracy concepts, but we eventually managed to overcome the potential demise of the curriculum through the integration of the new tool.

What we must remember is that social media, like any technology, is just a tool. In and of itself it's quite benign. Apply a negative application and it can be the subject of misuse or abuse; apply a positive application and it has the capability to transform the way we live, work and learn.

The power for learning comes from good teachers applying their content and pedagogical knowledge to enable their students to use the tools to source, create, publish and share knowledge. The potential for social media is in the making of connections – across the classroom, across the corridor and across the globe.

Imagine the depth of learning if we take a 2D concept from a page in a book or on a static website and explore it in the 3D world via a global collaboration with an expert in the field, or the like.

At this point I am often thwarted in my arguments by concerned teachers or school leaders who say 'how can we teach our students something we don't know a lot about ourselves?' To which I usually reply, 'well, you can't!' It is not realistic to expect every teacher to know every tool. But that's the beauty of social media, teachers don't need to teach the kids how to use it, they already know. In fact, teachers can benefit from learning from their students and working with them to unlock the potential of the tools for more relevant and engaging learning experiences - grounded in good theory and practice, of course. And the benefits are not just in student learning. Teachers and school leaders can become part of the growing educational conversation using social tools like Twitter to benefit their own professional learning.

Incorporating new tools in classrooms is not like it was a few years ago where the library stocked a bank of desktops or you had to wheel around a trolley of notebooks. Today, technology offers a range of mobile connected devices to choose from and if your school doesn't have them or can't afford them, then get the kids to BYOD (bring your own device).

The recently released *Horizon Report K-12* predicts that mobile devices, apps and tablet computing will become increasingly prevalent in today's classroom. They see apps in particular as the fastest growing dimension of the mobile space in the K-12 sector 'with impacts on virtually every aspect of informal life, and increasingly, potential in almost every academic discipline'.

Whatever is on the horizon one thing is for certain, technology will continue to evolve and will do so at an exponential pace. We are just at the beginning of this journey. We could hide our heads in our notebooks but our students deserve better. As educators we need to prepare now to meet the challenges of our connected, digital world and harness the power of today's tools for learning and teaching. •

Greg Whitby is the executive director of schools in the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta.

Follow Greg on Twitter @gregwhitby or visit his blog bluyonder.wordpress.com

Changing everything? iPads in education

Grace Oakley, Mark Pegrum & Robert Faulkner
The University of Western Australia

Educators around the world are beginning to adopt mobile handheld technologies such as iPads for a range of teaching and learning purposes. With worldwide sales approaching 100 million, the fastest selling device in history is now being deployed in large numbers in schools and universities, even though it was not primarily designed for use in education and needs some re-purposing for educational contexts. Apple boldly states: 'The device that changed everything is now changing the classroom' (www.apple.com/education/ipad/). Whilst there is, as yet, little empirical evidence to back this claim, teachers and researchers are now engaged in investigating just how mobile devices, especially iPads, might be used to enrich learning – and whether they might in fact change classrooms in the process.

Over the past year, a team of researchers from the Graduate School of Education at The University of Western Australia (UWA) has been working with the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) to find out how schools in Western Australia are using mobile technologies to teach literacy. Teachers of K-10 students have shown enthusiasm about the potential of portable, tactile devices like the iPad, which was easily the dominant mobile technology being used in the schools we visited. There is considerable interest in the plethora of apps now available, and how they might be used to teach reading, writing, listening and speaking in the traditional sense alongside new literacies. But interest in adopting these technologies is tempered by a degree of frustration and confusion. For example, teachers have reported spending many hours and dollars downloading and evaluating apps, only to find that few can be counted as 'quality' apps that might be worthy of a place in their classroom.

The first phase of our project involved interviewing principals, deputy principals, teachers and IT support staff at ten independent schools in Western Australia, mainly in Perth but also in one large regional centre. These principals and teachers could be termed 'early adopters', whose use of mobile technologies was driven by pedagogical curiosity and passionate commitment to their students. All ten schools were using iPads, with four also using the iPod Touch. It was found that each school was navigating its own pathway in implementing these technologies in the classroom, with most at the point of considering how best to move from an early adopter model to more systematic planning. Despite differences between schools, we were able to identify a number of common principles underpinning both the successes and challenges faced by teachers in the use of mobile handheld technologies. Many of these principles involved binary possibilities, revealing tensions faced by teachers (Pegrum, Oakley & Faulkner, 2012).

One of these tensions revolved around the role of iPads as consumption versus production devices. So far, iPads have primarily been seen by educators as consumption devices, used for looking up websites, reading e-books, viewing multimedia materials, and accessing apps underpinned by older learning approaches based on content transmission or behaviourist drill and practice exercises. In our study, teachers saw such apps as having some value, depending on learning goals. For example, one teacher had successfully used drill apps to help students improve their retention of French vocabulary, while others had used apps to improve students' maths skills. In early childhood settings consumption apps were used to support the learning of letters and sounds, while some teachers of older children went paperless, turning their teaching materials into e-books that students could access through iBooks. However, despite some educational and organisational enhancement, using mobile devices as a means of consumption does not transform teaching and learning and cannot be seen as 'changing everything'.

On the other hand, some teachers reported using mobile devices for production rather than consumption. They exploited multimodal digital storytelling apps like *eBook Magic*, *Puppet Pals* and *Sock Puppets*, for example, to enrich literacy learning. Such productive use of iPads sits better with contemporary pedagogical approaches like social constructivism, which informs the teaching philosophies of many educators. Nevertheless, in the sense that this aligns with existing learning theories and does not challenge or alter them, it does not 'change everything'. Yet we can see some differences emerging here: devices like iPads support students' metacognition through recording of 'think alouds'; enable their collaborative construction of texts; allow them to publish and share work with peers and parents; facilitate their interaction with networked audiences; and permit their consolidation of learning across formal and informal educational spaces. The devices can also facilitate the learning of new literacies alongside traditional literacy skills, helping students understand digital networking as they develop semi-public online voices. In short, the real transformative effect of mobile devices like iPads may stem from making contemporary pedagogical approaches easier to realise, practically and effectively, in the classroom, and carrying these approaches into the digital, multimedia age. Is the full potential of the devices being exploited? Not yet. But we are seeing moves in this direction as teachers gain more confidence, technologically and pedagogically, in using iPads and in exploring the new learning spaces and networks that they can open up.

Another commonly discussed tension involved the use of iPads as collaborative versus personal devices. While mobile devices were designed as personal tools, and are typically used that way at middle and upper school levels, many early childhood and primary teachers have been

trialling them as shared devices. This does not only have budgetary advantages, but pedagogical ones, since working in pairs or groups with iPads or iPod Touches can teach young children important collaboration and teamwork skills. But there are challenges, many of them to do with logistical issues, like storing different students' work on a single device, and technical issues, like ensuring the same apps are available and updated on all devices. Many schools were frustrated, too, at the lack of bulk app licencing arrangements.

In the second phase of our research, we have been working with schools to investigate how iPads might best be used to promote literacy learning. Based on the principles and recommendations generated in the first phase of the project, we have supported teachers who are just beginning to use these devices in the teaching of literacy to embed them effectively into their pedagogy and link their use to the new Australian Curriculum. A community of practice has been established, underpinned by an online platform called the *MLearnWA* wiki (http://mlearnwa.wikispaces.com/). Currently open to AISWA schools, the wiki will be opened to all schools in the near future. We have also conducted numerous observations in schools, complemented by discussions with teachers, to further refine the principles and recommendations generated in the first phase of the research. After the conclusion of the project, these will be disseminated to the wider teaching community.

The second phase has had a particular focus on four case study schools. We were keen to see the effects of mobile technologies in schools which for geographical, socioeconomic or other reasons might not have easy access to devices such as iPads. AISWA supplied a class set of iPads to two such schools, one of which was a remote community school in the Pilbara region in the north of Western Australia. Teachers there found innovative ways of using iPads to enrich students' learning at different levels and for different purposes. An early childhood teacher, for example, found that consumption-style apps for learning names and sounds, and writing the letters of the alphabet, were effective. The children, who usually found it difficult to sustain concentration, were able to stay on task for longer when using iPads, with their touchscreens and multimodal presentation formats. Adolescents at the same school used the iPads in a more productive mode, creating multimedia e-books about their community. Again, the teacher reported fewer classroom management issues than usual as a result of much greater student engagement. It can be seen, then, that mobile technologies offer considerable benefits outside the affluent urban schools where they are more usually found.

Overall, participating teachers were very positive about the potential of iPads. Certainly it is true that consumption-based apps have some place in supporting learning, and production-based apps resonate strongly with contemporary pedagogical approaches. Greater student engagement is a clear bonus too. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the full potential of devices like iPads to extend classrooms beyond their traditional bounds is still to be realised. So, are iPads changing everything? Well, not just yet, but we should watch this space. •

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Why mobile technology makes sense in the 21st century classroom

Justine Isard

Teaching and learning is in an interesting space right now. We have an abundance of opportunities online and to say we might feel bombarded at times is probably an understatement. With so many choices online, thousands of apps, different tablets on the market, the BYOT (Bring Your Own Technology) debate, and the list goes on. Where do we start when it comes to mobile technology in the classroom and where does it fit, and does it really get results?

First of all mobile technology does have a place in the 21st Century Classroom and yes it does get results. This current generation now dubbed the 'Touch Generation' (due to the surge of tablets in our lives) has been born into a high speed Wi-Fi internet connection where everything seems to be a Google search away and learning via mobile technology is a very natural and organic process. This is mostly because it's very much a part of their lives and when schools embrace this technology the teaching and learning experience becomes more real and relevant.

Research is showing us with experienced and innovative educators driving mobile technology schools will see improved learning outcomes and greater engagement. *Time Magazine* (2012) revealed a study that showed students that used mobile technology (iPads) in the classroom scored better in literacy tests than those that did not. An Oklahoma State University study indicated that 75 per cent of the students in the pilot agreed that the iPad enhanced the learning experience (21st Century Fluency Project, 2012) and it appears students with access to smartphones are studying school related materials more frequently with approximately 40 minutes more per week than students without access to a smartphone (Digital Trends, 2011).

So why is mobile technology effective in the classroom? The use of mobile devices like iPads taps into students' preferred styles of learning and suits their interests. They are easily accessible and the intuitive nature of mobile technology makes it a real game changer in the classroom. When tablets are embraced in the classroom the learning is less focused on whole class teaching and offers more individual and personalised learning opportunities. It is also less 'teacher' centred and more 'student' centred with them enjoying greater autonomy over their learning. The flexibility of these devices means students can investigate topics further, revisit learning if needed and drive their own learning.

It's also about the opportunities this learning platform creates; there is greater use of social networking which allows for more student voices to be heard, wider audience and deeper reflection. By using social media students and teachers can discuss social networking behaviour, cyber safety and many other 21st century skills essentials.

With all the excitement around the possibilities of mobile technology in schools, we ask ourselves 'Is this the transformation in learning we have been waiting for?' Time will surely tell, but the one thing that remains true is that it is not the technology that makes a lesson or learning exciting, it is the teacher. John Hattie's research and others have found that the effectiveness of the teacher to be the biggest impact on student learning and this has not changed with the influx of devices and apps in our classrooms. Any educator will tell you when it comes to student learning it's about pedagogy first, technology second. Educators using technology effectively in the classroom will tell you, it's not about getting the mobile device out and saying- 'what are we going to learn today?' It is about educators having a clear vision on the purpose of the teaching and learning experience and how to achieve that outcome. Technology will never overshadow the critical role of the teacher in the classroom; it simply enhances the learning experience.

So what makes mobile technology more special than PCs or laptops? It's not about it being 'more special' as they all have their place, but to me the best technology is the one you have with you. Something that you can easily carry is most likely to be the most accessible and practical. Think about how we take photos these days, for me about 80-90 per cent of the photos are taken on my smartphone because the best camera I have is the one I have with me. The tools we have for learning are really no different and for our students this is even more so. It is almost instinctual to reach for their mobile device to complete an activity or quickly find something out online. For many students this is still not possible because mobile technology is banned at their school and we wonder why some students are disengaged and feel school has no relevance.

The greatest irony in banning a mobile technology in our schools to me is potentially the greatest learning that could happen as a result of allowing it. We want young people to have digital literacy skills, be safe and responsible online, but we are not allowing them to

utilise the technology that will give them the opportunity to learn and to be guided. It is like expecting our young people to be safe and competent drivers on the road, but not allowing them to drive a car. You bet you are opening Pandora's box, but the advantages of teaching these new literacies, digital fluencies, and dealing with some of the negative uses far outweigh the disadvantages. We are wasting time if schools are not addressing these issues within our curriculum and making it a priority - they are 21st century life skills.

From my research schools that are having success with tablets and mobile devices in the classroom have some commonalities.

From this I have put together these tips to support schools in harnessing mobile technology:

- Strong School Leadership
- A School Community with a clear and united vision
- All working towards the same common goal
- A whole school community that encourages risk taking, innovation and experimenting
- That offers colleagues support not judgement
- Resiliency (a healthy environment that promotes positive attitudes in dealing with setbacks)
- Self-education (spending time getting familiar with device capabilities and road-testing)
- Opportunities for teachers to discuss and reflect
- Showcasing and sharing in staff meetings, parent teacher nights, assemblies, online etc
- Open door policy in classrooms- teachers welcome to come into each other's classrooms
- Expertise in schools - go-to people
- Valuing teachers that are giving mobile technology a go in their classroom
- Peer Mentoring -experienced users of mobile technology with less experienced
- Building communities online and with other schools through social networks
- Emphasis on teacher responsibility rather than accountability
- Sustained Professional Development •

Justine Isard is director of MyLearning, based in Melbourne and is currently running conference presentations around Australia on harnessing iPads in the classroom. www.mylearningsite.com.au

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Digital social networking: Implications for education

Dr Gerald K White

Social networking in education continues to be a controversial topic with debatable benefits for learning, especially as the efficacy of Facebook is reported constantly in the news media. This controversy has been recently fuelled by educational research indicating that the inappropriate use of social networking can lead to distractibility and decreased student performance. Contrasting evidence about the use of social networking in education tells another story, suggesting educators should harness social networking to improve learning. However, the appropriate use of social networking for learning will not occur without teacher-led programs in schools, training colleges and universities. There is an argument based on research evidence that teacher led social networking can have considerable benefits for learning.

Social networking has been occurring over centuries via personal exchanges of letters, phone calls and meetings, all of which have been promoted, one way or another, through education. Most recently the means by which we make social contact has expanded exponentially through digital technologies, allowing networks to be formed in virtual spaces. The advent of connected computing first unleashed new forms of communications such as email and online messaging services, with interactive internet communications using text, audio, animation and then digital video not long afterwards. The capacity to interact remotely over vast distances and in real time has become both possible and popular. The introduction of mobile telephones took interactive communication to yet another level such that today social networking using mobile devices such as mobile phones, tablets, ultra-laptops and e-readers has become almost globally ubiquitous.

Social networking has played a unique role in the internet's development of a space for participation that can be increasingly customised to the users own interests; through blogging and podcasting; syndicating news, music and interviews; posting photographs, videos and speeches; and sharing creative works, events, bookmarks and culturally mixed content. Wikipedia, an online encyclopaedia, is an example of a highly successful participatory online service, allowing users to edit entries and suggest changes for greater accuracy and detail. Meanwhile, Facebook has grown to attract 75 per cent of US social networking visitors (comScore, 2011), and is now the dominant social networking online service with an international audience of over 800 million albeit with questionable privacy policies.

According to the Australian Communication and Media Authority, over 90 per cent of Australians access the internet regularly with the most frequent users being people aged 14 to 34 years. In fact, Green (2011) found that young people between the ages of 9 and 16 were also frequent users of the internet (96 per cent) often using mobile devices. Importantly, the same study found the most common online activities for Australian children were education related (86 per cent) with 63 per cent of children engaging with social networking services such as Facebook and messaging. There can be little doubt about the extent of the use of the internet, mobile devices and social networking among learners.

The fact that social networking is used today by learners in formal settings such as schools, training colleges, universities and informally through self-directed learning, is an indication of the connectedness of teachers, students and learners. Connectedness can occur almost anywhere, at any time and from most locations around the world. However, there is a persistent confusion about the benefits of social networking to education because of its dual purposes. Social networking can be for private social reasons or entertainment,

We know that in the hands of a skilful digitally-literate teacher or lecturer that learning engagement and learning performance do improve.

on the one hand, and for productive or educational purposes, on the other.

Traditionally, schooling has focused on learning an agreed set of subjects or courses and the achievement of predetermined knowledge, skills and attitudes or competencies that were planned and assessed. Social activities, on the other hand, occurred outside of formal lessons and lectures in places such as meeting spaces e.g playgrounds, refectories, canteens, or friends' homes, studies, libraries and homes. That is, the differences between the productive use of time and the social use of time have been vaguely understood. Today, social networking online tools can be harnessed almost anywhere and at any time to improve learning and achievement (or they can become a distraction to learning, if left to chance).

The factors that emerge as having important effects on school students' learning are teachers, the leadership of principals and the learning environments that are established for student learning. However, the impact of self-directed learning today using online services is equally as important as learning in formal educational institutions. For example, OECD (2011) reporting on the 2009 PISA results stated that,

'Using a computer at home is related to digital reading performance in all 17 participating countries and economies, but that is not always true for computer use at school' (OECD, 2009, p. 20).

Students are not experts in the use of digital technologies and that includes students who use digital technologies at home. Kennedy et.al. (2009) in a study called *Educating the Net Generation: Implications for Learning and Teaching in Australian Universities* found that first-year university students were not expert users of digital technologies and needed to be taught how to use these technologies for learning to gain maximum impact. 'Evaluation showed that emerging technologies can improve student learning processes, outcomes, and assessment practices if managed and aligned with pedagogical, technical, and administrative issues; but that innovative technologies typically require the development of new skills which is effortful for both students and staff' (Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 2009). There is little evidence to support the argument that students as digital natives are experts, whereas teachers are digital immigrants, who find using digital technologies difficult (Prensky, 2011). The digital natives metaphor has become grossly misinterpreted. We know that in the hands of a skilful digitally-literate teacher or lecturer that learning engagement and learning performance do improve. Tamim et.al. (2011) found that on average student performance increased by 12 percentile points which is significant.

Knowing that students' learning is improved using technology in the hands of skilled teachers and in supportive home and school environments, a cogent learning framework is needed so that educators can base their teaching on an accepted set of learning principles. Siemens (2004) introduced a widely accepted learning theory for the digital age called *Connectivism* in which he extended existing learning theories to incorporate permanent online connectedness. Siemens (2004) argued that knowledge and learning are embedded in networks and that knowledge and learning come from a diversity of opinions within the networks. By connecting and interacting with networked information and people, learning is enhanced. This breakthrough has given educators a basis on which to develop learning programs that incorporate digital capacities. So, what then is slowing the educational take up of digital technologies in learning programs?

There are many familiar reasons for the lack of use of ICT and social networking in education; including technical and connectivity barriers, teacher confidence and competency, pedagogical integration and legal issues (copyright, privacy, inappropriate content, bullying). However, the literature also abounds with evidence of the prolific use of social networking by learners outside of formal learning institutions.

In 2009, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) reported that nearly half of children 12-14 years of age used social networking services, predominantly females. That figure is much higher in 2012 with Socialbakers (2012) reporting that over 50 per cent of the Australian population or 62.2 per cent of internet users use Facebook. The paradox here is that both teachers and students are known to be prolific users of the internet and social networking services yet these services are rarely used in formal educational programs. A disconnect appears to be emerging between the use of social networking in formal learning institutions and self-directed learning outside of formal learning institutions.

Educators may not be startled to learn that the use of digital social networking services and student learning performance can be negatively related. Kirschner & Karpinski (2010) found that frequent users of Facebook had lower achievement scores than non-users of Facebook. This is not surprising because learners who are more focused on social activities usually have lower learning performance scores than learners focused on achievement. Distractibility within social networking services can diminish learning. Hence, learners more focused on using social networking services for entertainment or for personal/private purposes can be expected to perform less well than learners who use social networking services in learning programs specifically designed for learning purposes.

Online discussions among students, designed to be part of courses, has also been the subject of research with some interesting findings. Bain (2011) found that learners who responded to questions in a timely manner, for example within 24 hours, were more likely to engage in discussions than those who took longer. Further, the composition of a written response led to a deeper understanding of the content and built on other learners' comments which also led to a broadening of the learner's view of the content. The online discussion and within it the act of composition appeared to deepen thinking and contribute to the group. Group interactions can 'create opportunities for collective, shared thinking in which the individual thinking of a learner may be shaped by engaging with the thinking

of others' (Bain, 2011, p. 31). This is a particularly important insight because research has consistently indicated that interaction is a necessary component of learning. There is a strong possibility that technology can enhance interaction if the appropriate online skills have been learnt. The research by Bain (2011) also indicated that students who were vocal in face to face classroom settings were not particularly active online, whereas the quieter students became very engaged online. The addition of online interactions as a part of courses would appear to provide for a broader inclusion and engagement of students, especially where online discussion skills have been taught. It is not unreasonable to argue that research supports the notion that programs should be designed to incorporate digital technologies (Baker, 2010) and that social networking and collaboration that are taught may improve educational achievement.

The skills associated with successful online collaboration are new to the compendium of skills required by teachers and lecturers. Collaboration is a process and as such the skills to foster it need

to be learnt and mastered to maximise the benefits in complex online learning environments that use social networking for productive learning purposes. Research, health and science are three areas that have benefited greatly from online collaboration which is particularly suited to problem solving. When used in education, collaboration is a process for the creation of knowledge in physical and virtual space and can be used very successfully for conceptual development, discussion, interactivity and providing feedback. Collaboration also has the capacity to enable learners to engage with people from diverse locations and backgrounds, who may be experts in their fields, in both presentation, and question and answer mode. Such a use of collaboration for learning can enable teachers and students during courses to engage in a very cost effective and timely manner outside of their immediate physical environment.

The inclusion of social networking in learning programs also places new requirements on teachers who need to become familiar with the new skills to handle new forms of online interaction with the resulting demands of increased interaction and possibly time. For example, individual feedback and interaction on a 24/7 basis for classes would appear to be impractical. One solution for teachers and lecturers who use social networking services in courses and programs is to provide conditions-of-use guidelines that suggest limiting the time of responses, grouping common issues for a collective response and further discussion, and by providing group feedback where it is relevant rather than individual feedback to each participant. These innovative techniques and many more have been clearly demonstrated by George Siemens and Stephen Downes in their massive open online courses (Kop, 2011).

In order to improve learning, the skills of social networking and the use of ICT also need to be taught in a systematic manner in the same way as any other new learning process. After all, most students engaged in formal education learnt from the print medium for twelve years but the electronic medium has become much more complex and may take equally as long. Leaving the development of social networking and ICT skills to random selection and serendipity is tantamount to an abrogation by educators of current and future student learning, as a small selection of research findings has demonstrated here. There is a need to teach a selection of critical topics covering digital use in education.

The following suggestions for topics to be included in teacher education courses and schools addresses this gap for the effective use of the internet and social networking. It also takes into account the skills that are needed to successfully use digital technologies for learning such as critical thinking and collaboration. General topics such as online safety and legal issues including copyright, privacy and the digital commons have also been included because in the digital environment these are more complex. The suggested topics include:

- Acceptable behaviour
- Collaboration, communication, problem solving and research skills
- Digital Commons
- Community involvement
- Copyright
- Critical thinking
- Design skills

- Digital fluency
- Ethics
- History of the internet
- Identity
- Project management
- Safety
- Technology terms

These topics, if taught systematically throughout education, would begin to address the skills and safety issues that are needed by teachers and students in the digital age to engage in learning programs that are connected and current. No-one would argue that technology is the single most important factor in learning because the research is quite unequivocal that quality teachers and quality teaching have the most significant value (Hattie, 2009), as does the home environment for self-directed learning. However, in the hands of quality teachers who design and engage in supportive learning environments, the gains from using technology are well documented. Developing courses for teachers, students and parents alike about digital social networking would also help to promote the successful and safe use of the internet in order to improve learning.

To summarise, we know from nation-wide surveys that teachers and students are high users of the internet and social networking, yet evidence would suggest that digital literacy is learnt at home and not at school. Many reasons have been advanced for this apparent lack of use of the internet and social networking in education even though research has shown that students' most common uses are educational activities. The benefits to education of creativity, interactivity and collaboration together with wider student inclusiveness from online discussion have been shown to result from skilful use of online social networking whereas personal or entertainment uses of social networking can lead to distractibility and decreased student performance. There would appear to be a dilemma in the use of social networking in education that needs to be the focus of further research, especially with the rise of self-directed learning.

Social networking has been transformed by the use of online digital and mobile devices, so that it is now global and pervasive throughout society, including in education. Research has indicated that there are significant learning achievement gains to be made from the successful and learnt use of social networking, including the need for the acquisition of new skills. Teachers, lecturers and students need to become familiar with the use of social networking for educationally productive purposes before its benefits, such as engagement with the digital commons, collaboration and other services, can be realised. The use of social networking in education, coupled with face to face engagement, can enable greater inclusiveness for learners although the role of teachers needs to be well supported to develop successful digital pedagogies. Research evidence suggests that the learning gains from using social networking in education are significant and so courses about how to use social networking effectively are important in teacher education. Teachers, and students and their parents are already prolific users of the internet although the skills for maximising social networking for learning have yet to be realised. •

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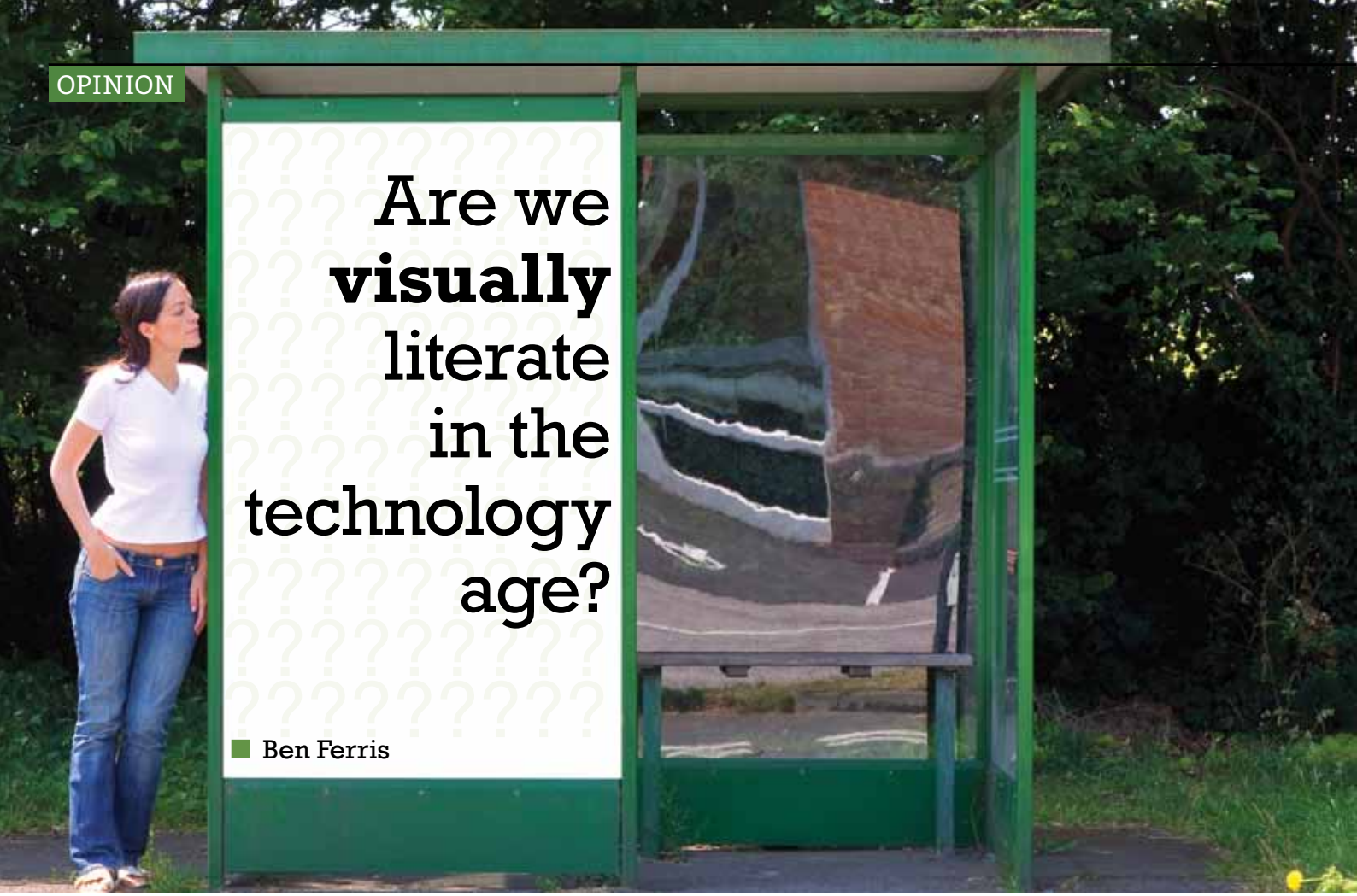
For further details of research into the use of ICT in education refer to the Digital Education Research Network (DERN) at www.dern.org.



Are we **visually** literate in the technology age?

Ben Ferris

From the advertising posters at the bus stop to the moving images in the evening news, images form a critical part of our daily lives. Communicating by images is as old as, if not preceding, both oral and aural communication.

Sophisticated communication has been identified as one of the essential keys to a species' survival. Surely we are therefore well equipped to deal with the proliferation of still and moving images characteristic of the technology age?

The term 'literacy' refers to a user's ability to communicate in any given language, be it text or image-based. Communication is of course a two-way street, and requires that we not only articulate our thoughts, but understand the thinking of others.

At the Sydney Film School (where we teach students interested in the art of communicating through moving images) we notice that our students come to us with a fairly sophisticated level of production (i.e. image-making) skills, but, and here's the rub, a surprisingly low level of critical analysis (i.e. image-reading) skills.

We are often aware of how images make us feel, but we are not often conscious of why they make us feel this way. This additional, but critical, step of conscious image-reading is often absent from our visual literacy when applied to our reading of advertising and media more generally. Advertising for the most part encourages us to feel desirous of something we don't have. It works on a premise that our brains will be switched off and our animalistic instincts will take over. Emotionally I believe that if I drink that soft drink I will become just as sexy and happy as the girl in the poster. But this is not critical image-reading. Reading the image critically tells us that the sexiness and happiness of the girl in the poster in fact has nothing at all to do with the soft drink she is drinking, and has everything to do with the casting of the model, her performance at the photo shoot, the abilities of the photographer, and, most likely, the competence of a digital artist who has airbrushed away any of her imperfections. If I then walk into a shop and buy a can of cola I only have myself and my visual illiteracy to blame for it. I allowed the marketing to manipulate me. I wasted money and look nothing like a girl on the poster.

It's no coincidence critical analysis skills are missing from our palette. For a start, they are much harder to teach. It is much easier to learn something while practising it: in our case, how to frame something, how to light it, how the actor moves through the frame, etc. but much harder for students to engage while sitting in a lecture room and trying to watch and analyse something. And yet these analytical thinking skills are critical to the development of any filmmaker worth their salt.

There are two ways to read images: passively (where the emotion is king – laugh, cry, scream) and actively, with the mind. It is this active participation that I am talking about when I refer to critical image-reading. At first, it feels painful as with any form of muscular exercise, but once we get used to it, it can become automatic and equally (if not more so) enjoyable. Active participation allows us to engage with the kinds of choices a filmmaker (or advertiser, or journalist) has made in putting the film together – what they have chosen to include and, equally importantly, what they have chosen to leave out.

Active image-reading allows us to engage more fully and more truthfully with the world around us. It allows us to become more discriminating viewers of what we are being presented with on a daily basis. In fact, it is nothing short of enlightenment. Active image-reading tells us the truth about the information we are hunting and gathering around us, and this is the key to our survival in the information age. It's the only thing that prevents us from becoming slaves to the technology we have created. •

Ben Ferris is a film writer / director, and the Director of the Sydney Film School.

This is an edited extract from his presentation as part of a discussion panel on Visual Literacy, held at the Sydney Film School in association with the ABC Big Ideas program.

Book review: What's up with universities

Richard Hil, *Whackademia: An insider's account of the troubled university*, 9781742232911, 240pp

Inger Mewburn
RMIT University

When a friend showed me the blurb for *Whackademia: an insider's account of the troubled university*, I immediately left the office to buy a copy, solely on the promise in the title.

I read it in just two sittings but finished with conflicted feelings. This book made me angry when I agreed with what it had to say, and even angrier when I disagreed.

It starts well; Dr Hil criticises academics for succumbing to a 'culture of complaint' about university management, for accepting unreasonably high workloads, parlous conditions for casual lecturers and for failing to suggest viable alternatives. He then goes on to rant for 200 or so pages without offering any viable alternatives.

There is a short list of 'tactics' at the end which are not, in my view, very useful.

On reflection, I would have been much happier with this book if it had just been the memoirs of a grumpy old (academic) man rather than what it is: an extended essay on the ills of the contemporary university from a left of centre point of view.

Richard Hil went to university in the 1970s when, apparently, Things Were Better. It all went to hell in the 80s when governments around the world had a neo-liberal makeover. Suddenly academics were accountable to taxpayers, the HECs scheme was introduced and universities started selling education to students from overseas.

Now, according to Hil, academics are not trusted to do their primary job, which he believes is to produce engaged and informed citizens. Hil claims that campuses have become like malls, with cafes and shops. Students are treated like 'shoppers who have come to expect that they will get the degree they pay for'.

I do agree with Hil that a purely vocational education is not what universities should offer, mostly because we cannot predict the future. My job and the jobs of many people I know did not exist when I was at university. But I'm not convinced academics have a large role to play in the political education of their students.

Perhaps Hil has not looked at the primary and high school curriculum lately; the pre-tertiary educators are doing a pretty good job of covering the basics. I do think we should help students to become critically aware, informed and ethical professionals, but this does not have to be at odds with ensuring and maintaining quality.

I paid for my education, which began the year the HECs scheme was introduced. I don't remember lively, socially engaged campuses; I do remember the terrible food at the ghastly unionised café and plenty of boring, irrelevant lectures from professors who had not changed their slides since the 1960s. When I finally hit the workforce and could not perform the basic tasks expected of me I was not at all sure my undergraduate education was value for money.

My views on the importance of ensuring teaching quality have only been reinforced since I started working in the most lightly regulated part of university teaching: research education. Until recently, PhDs didn't even have time limits, let alone statements of outcomes and expectations.

Most of the problems I see in my area occur due to lack of oversight and rules, not because of them. In fact, in my opinion PhD students would be a whole lot better off if they were treated a bit more like shoppers – or at least like clients. Universities offer the opportunity to gain a degree, but some PhD students find all sorts of barriers are put in the way of taking advantage of this opportunity.

The most disappointing aspect of this book for me is the tone of nostalgic activism, which offers no obvious way forward. I agree with Hil that there are problems in our academic workplaces, especially with workloads and the vast numbers of marginalised employees. Academics should be more actively involved in policy making for example. But in my experience many are so disaffected they don't even open the emails inviting them to be part of the process.

Hil's list of 'tactics', for the most part, sanction this apathy, in particular his suggestion to pretend to listen to, but basically ignore, those like me, who work in improving teaching quality. I suspect an anti-technology agenda lurking behind Hil's disdain for professionals in learning and teaching units. In my view more academics should seek advice from specialists about how to make changes to the way they work.

Academics can leverage technology to save time, which could be spent in being more active in workplace decision making.

So – should you buy this book? It's one of the more entertaining critiques of the state of higher education in Australia I've read, even if I think it could have been so much more. Sure – it made me angry, but it was a good kind of angry; the kind that made me think deeply about what we might do to make academia a better place. •

THE CONVERSATION
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Using wikis for student collaboration in the classroom

Brendan Toohey

I have been a big fan of wikis for a few years now. They provide an easy to build website template – and they're free! Wikispaces provides a free upgrade if your wiki is for K-12 education which gives you an ad-free site and access to Projects.

Most instances of wiki use in education I've seen fall into one of the following categories:

- Teacher controlled class web page of links, information, video clips;
- Metapage for teachers to share ideas, strategies, resources;
- Class web page with separate pages for student work.

You may notice that in these categories it is only groups of teachers who actually use the true nature of the wiki – collaboration. This is perhaps due to the fear 'What might the students do to my page?' Where teachers want students to post comments, this has usually been done within a blog.

But there is much to be gained from setting up groupwork tasks on a wiki:

- Students can contribute to the group project while working side by side, or from separate locations;
- Different aspects of a task can be divided up amongst a group for initial individual work, and then brought together;
- Students can proof and edit each other's work – while they can often struggle to self-edit, I have found that they are happy to make, and accept, legitimate criticism on their peers' work.
- The teacher can see (via 'revisions') who has contributed what to the group task. It was impossible to allow students access to edit some pages but not others on a single Wikispaces wiki, and so the obvious solution was to create separate ones. This is what I did in consecutive years for a group task on the US Civil Rights Movement (see, for example, http://11hism2010-crm.wikispaces.com/).

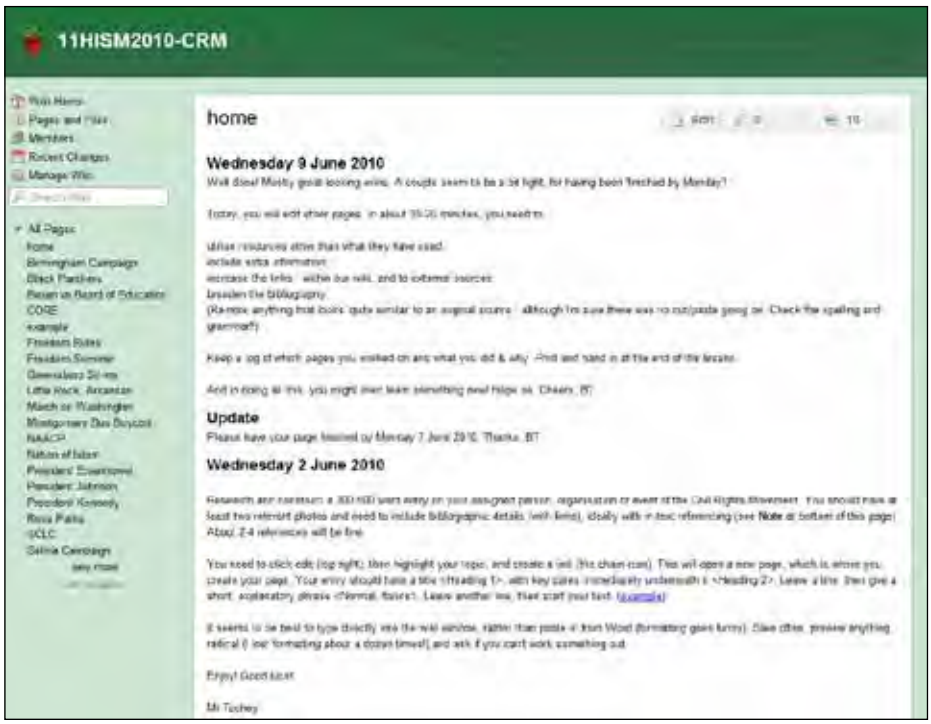
Alternatively, with senior classes, I have given students editing access to the whole wiki and encouraged them to add links, YouTube clips and information as they come across them. With these classes, it is possible to get them to research and contribute articles to the class wiki – giving them a part ownership of the site. (And much excitement recently when one of the students discovered pages the class had written were the top three hits on Google).

Here is a brief outline of three ways of using wikis for student input and collaboration, in chronological order of my use (and thus probably in reverse order of 'best practice').

Specific wiki for one task

Setting up a new wiki is easy, and so it is not really a big deal to set up a new wiki for each new task. During 2009-2010, it was in this sporadic manner that I wet my toe in the wiki pool.

Near the end of the unit on Civil Rights in the USA, each student was given one



aspect of the civil rights movement to research and write 300-500 words. This was to include photos and bibliographic details. In a following double (100 minute) lesson, there were three rotations of students adding and editing their peers' contributions. The downside, of course, is that I needed twenty-two different topics, one for each student. Towards the end of the process, many found it difficult to come up with new information, particularly on the less important topics. This allowed me to get them to concentrate on advanced research and presentation:

- more refined internet searches than the topic and the first three hits on Google;
- broadening the bibliography;
- using authoritative sites;
- critiquing other websites – they found that many sites' information was nothing less than a copy/paste from Wikipedia.
- linking people, events and concepts to internal and external pages;
- inserting more pictures or YouTube clips.

If you visit the wiki (http://11hism2010-crm.wikispaces.com/), you will notice that some pages are better than others. This is dependent, of course, on the students who worked on each page (although I tried to balance student ability across each topic). On reflection, I would also give students longer in their editing stages (thirty minutes, rather than twenty). I had hoped that this would be useful for revision before the end of year exam, but viewing the usage graphs for September (which is the end of Year 11 for NSW students) there were only two days in September of higher than usual page visits. The 15th has 31 views from 17 unique visitors (surprise, surprise, the same day class revision was 'Use the wiki to revise…'). More interesting is that on the 11th, one visitor went to 18 pages. So, unless someone from outside the class miraculously found the wiki and was so impressed by it, one student in the class used it for revision, before being reminded of it in class. This is unsurprising, as the wiki in 2010 was really a once-off exercise with students who did not have school laptops. It is an example of my learning curve, not necessarily of a great site.

With the introduction of student laptops last year, student and teacher use of wikis at AIS has expanded exponentially. Indicative, perhaps, is the wiki I set up for my International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme History class (http://aiss-dphistory.wikispaces.com/). What started as an addendum to the Moodle page has overtaken it, so that now Moodle is used only for submitting assignments. The wiki rivals the textbooks for usage, with supplementary links and clips easily accessible for the class. Wiki use school-wide is now such that AIS has its own 'Private Label' with Wikispaces.

One wiki – students have full access

The DP History class just mentioned is the one that I have given full editing privileges. I am lucky that as the first cohort of our Diploma Programme, there are only five in the class, so over the course of the eighteen months we've been together there has been a very collaborative vibe rather than a more formal 'sage on the stage' environment. I prefer to get senior history classes doing their own research and reading as I believe it gives them a better understanding of the content and is more interesting than enduring PowerPoints *ad infinitum*, as well as developing necessary skills for uni.

As a revision task, I asked the students to develop articles on five aspects of Germany between the wars. (There were five areas and each student had to choose two areas to write on.) I think this worked only because it was a small class, working side by side. A much bigger class trying to all contribute to only five pages would have come up against wiki's key drawback: if different students are working on the same page simultaneously, they will overwrite each other's text.

Fortunately, Wikispaces has come up with a solution: 'Projects'

In the last year or so, however, Wikispaces have introduced 'Projects ' for its upgraded (paid) levels or if you've taken advantage of the education upgrade. Projects allow a teacher (as Organiser) to combine the 'class webpage' of teacher

supplied text, resources, links etc. that is locked to students, with an area that students can edit. Even better is that permissions can be organised so that while they are working, students cannot see other groups' pages, but once the task is finished, editing can be stopped (totally, or at least until marking has taken place) but all pages opened up for viewing by members of the wiki, or even fully public.

Of course, Teachers/Organisers retain full access to the entire site, including all Projects. I initially tried to set up the DP History Germany revision task as a Project, but as a class we felt that it was better to sit on the website proper and that they could work around each other so as not to be over-writing each other.

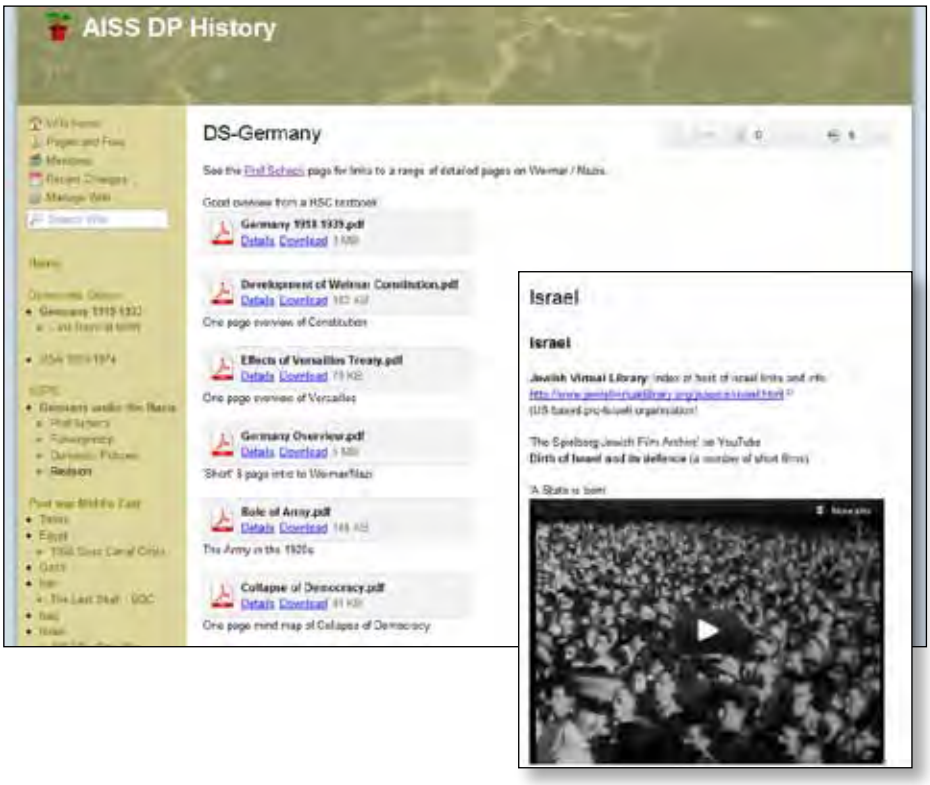
Projects now allow all members of a class to be working on similar group tasks without the need for the setting up of many different wikis. They are private to the group, unless or until the teacher sets wider access. The two Projects that I have run so far this year have worked much more smoothly than the Civil Rights tasks in 2009 and 2010 when the whole class were working off the same home page.

One great benefit that I like about Projects is that I can follow the work of students as they progress through a task. Initially, many of my students put together a document on Word and then copied it across, but I have since asked that they work wholly within Projects. There was the usual grumbling until I pointed out that there could be no hard drive crashes, or forgetting to save, or the many other usual excuses, if it was saved directly to Wikispaces. The more studious and organised students liked that they could also keep track of the other team members throughout the task, which gave me enough impetus to suggest that students 'could' be penalised for Organisation if they went four days without adding to the Project, even if in the early stages it consisted only of some references, headings and pictures.

The Grade Six teachers at AIS use Wikispaces as their homework platform, with each child currently having a separate page on the class wiki. When setting it up at the beginning of the year, the teachers were aware of the potential security issues: any student can view and copy/paste or edit another student's work (for good or evil) or a student could check a number of completed answers and create an amalgam answer that is less obviously plagiarised. Where the history of each page can be consulted in the first two instances, the third is impossible to check.

As part of the school's action research into wikis in education, I was working with one of the Grade Six teachers, and we thought that Projects provided a perfect way to counteract this. Each student could be his or her own 'team' and have full ownership and privacy over his or her homework responses, while having everything still on the one class wiki.

Wikis provide the perfect platform for student collaboration, whether as part of a formal group task, or in allowing students to help build their own site of useful information. This could be in writing an informative 'article' as one part of a group or class website on a topic, suggesting possible exam questions and model answers for revision, devising an annotated bibliography of good sources that they found while researching an essay, embedding YouTube clips, linking to relevant news articles or posting questions that they have thought of while outside the class (an online version of the 'Parking Lot' that many teachers use for questions that are not immediately relevant, but will come back to).



Be collaborative in your learning

As usual, the biggest roadblock to using this technology is the teacher's fear 'I don't know how to do it'. This is understandable, and reasonable. I suggest a twofold strategy. Firstly, try out Projects as a team. Get a few colleagues, even if you teach different subjects, and together set up a Project for one of your classes each. As you progress, share tips and experiences.

Secondly, get the students involved. The kids aren't dumb, so be honest. 'I'm just learning this, so if I stuff it up, bear with me. If you can work out good bits I haven't discovered yet, please tell me.' If you have time, and it is appropriate for your situation, let the kids work it out and then teach you (or even the team of teachers who were trying to help each other).

Wikis, especially Wikispaces' Projects, offer teachers an easy to set up, easy to track and easy to manage platform for online groupwork. They offer a solution for students working on the same digital project, even at home, without the 'But it's saved on Johnny's computer' excuse. They offer protection from plagiarism by other groups, and allow the teacher to see exactly who contributed what to the project, even while the task is being constructed. They are much easier than each member of the group taking turns to carry home the single copy of the project on a massive piece of cardboard each night! •

Note: I have used Wikispaces (www.wikispaces.com) exclusively for wikis and, therefore, the details within this article are based on Wikispaces. There are other wiki options available.

Brendan Toohey teaches History, Commerce and Theory of Knowledge at the Australian International School in Singapore. He is the facilitator of the school's Teacher Inquiry Group into using wikis in education.

Online learning: It is not about *where* – it's about *when*

Dinesh Poorun and Greg Whateley

Much praise is given to the ability of online learning to be delivered remotely, allowing students to learn from their homes, workplaces or geographically disparate areas. However, for time poor students, the more important factor is the flexibility to study around their other commitments.

Just as the modern teacher expects the flexibility to mark a paper from home, or to finalise a set of results while sitting on a beach in a different hemisphere, the technologically savvy student of today also demands flexible delivery of their education.

This is particularly the case in institutions such as UWSCollege, where students are undertaking foundation studies before progressing to university education. Students at the College are disproportionately from disadvantaged and low socioeconomic backgrounds and many are the first in their family to attend University. As a result these students often experience greater challenges to their learning due to time impediments such as family or work obligations. Many disenfranchised learners who have not been able to succeed via traditional classroom methods will be attracted by these more creative solutions.

UWSCollege is embracing this challenge, and is hoping online and 'blended' learning (combining online and face-to-face delivery) will be the panacea. They plan to deliver an initial blended learning course by 2013 and introduce a more comprehensive range of subjects in 2014. UWSCollege believes blended learning will be particularly effective, as while many students prefer face-to-face teaching or online learning, a combination of both can offer unique complementarities.

The rationale is that it is indeed possible to have orientations and introductions to the course face-to-face. Students will be guided through the process of accessing online materials such as content repositories, online lectures, discussion blogs, interactive activities and podcasts. We anticipate a diverse range of students – differing in age, cultural background and technological aptitude. In line with our policy of delivering equity to all our students, some students may be given access to wireless, mobile and handheld digital technology devices. All students will be given access to the computers that are found in the library and computer rooms on campus.

Students will be given the opportunity to attend some face-to-face sessions during the semester and in the lead up to final assessment tasks. These sessions will be 'drop in sessions' and will be conducted by the same tutors who have been interacting with the students online. Cohesion and continuity are therefore built into the course, online learning and face-to-face interaction becomes a seamless transition. Varying pedagogical practice can increase learning effectiveness, opportunity and access.

It is possible to tailor our courses to meet students' needs, deliver on our learning outcomes and meet our own stringent pedagogical standards utilising a mixed mode approach. In the virtual context you can actually be in more than one place at any given time. It is not about *where* you are it is about *when*.

Exceptional service has become a utopian ideal for many learners and education service providers. Often the reality is that 'monolith Universities' are not able to give the special attention to students that they need. Bigger lecture numbers, bigger tutorial sizes and less teacher time for students has become an unfortunate by-product of economic rationalisation.

The UWSCollege aims to provide its students with smaller class sizes and more access to teachers. Replicating this service in virtual technology is certainly a challenge. The learning institute of the future may indeed be likened to a virtual building - where learners are directed to their lecturers, online tasks, virtual discussion boards, critical reading activities and journal databases by way of a 'human interface' giving them the human touch that they need. Whateley and Bofinger (2012) have coined the apt phrase 'eConcierge' to describe the Electronic one stop eAdministrator come eCarer. This eConcierge would handle the administrative issues almost instantaneously and technical questions can be forwarded to the Course Facilitator or Lecturer/Tutor in an efficient and appropriate way. The eConcierge - to take the analogy of the virtual building one step further – would welcome the eLearner to the building, support them throughout their stay, and assist them in exiting in a timely and appropriate way. The eConcierge would also be present at face to face 'drop in sessions', again seamlessly blending the realities of virtual and the humanistic touch.

Steve Jobs' vision of accessing easy to use interfaces anywhere at anytime has enabled this paradigm shift to occur. Students are accessing learning materials with the aid of iPads, iPhones, Blackberries and laptops and the learning practitioner of today is expected to keep pace with these changes in communication and to respond to queries promptly. Our vision is to respond within a 12 hour time frame.

Educational institutions must ensure that the blended learning they deliver to tertiary students encapsulates flexibility through varied pedagogical practice, offers high level human interface service and equitable access to digital technology must be considered. •

Dinesh Poorun is the First Year Experience Coordinator for Foundation Studies and Subject Leader at UWSCollege.

Dr Greg Whateley is Director, Academic Quality at UWSCollege.

Humour and the quirky nature of online teaching

Dr Ian Broinowski

Humour is a matter of perception. Like beauty it is in the eye of the beholder – its very nature is unique to the conveyor and receiver. While one person can be highly amused by a trigger for humour another sitting beside may completely miss its meaning or interpretation. Humour is also highly contextual, cultural and often mysterious in its effect on people.

Using humour as a teaching tool in both traditional classrooms and in an online teaching environment is fraught with complexity, subtleties, dangers and delights but applied correctly can also add to students' participation and learning.

Humour, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary is 'a quality of action, speech etc, which causes amusement: facetiousness, comicality; (more fully sense of humour) the faculty of perceiving and enjoying what is ludicrous or amusing: a sense of ludicrous or amusing.' It is perhaps one of the most delicate of all human emotions resulting in laughter, joy or indeed the reverse; of anger, hostility and misinterpretation of what has been said or done by another person. One person's joke can be another's antithesis: it can be seen as funny, witty and amusing or alternatively, racist, sexist and hurtful to another individual. There is a licence for humour given out by the community to those who wish to use it.

Comedians, jesters, sitcoms are allowed to make fun, to entertain and challenge us through their actions. Some are given a special licence to poke fun: Steady Eddie has permission to make jokes about people with disabilities, 'wog' jokes by Greek or Italian comedians and gay humour by the gay and lesbian community.

As teachers we tread a fine line. The classroom is not generally perceived as a place for jokes and humour, teachers do

not have a licence to generate humour and cause amusement.

However we do know and have for many years, the value humour has to teaching. Even in prehistoric times before the internet its importance had been recognised as a way of improving student learning, participation and enjoyment of the subject they are aspiring to learn. It is important to examine these aspects of teaching prior to online learning to clearly understand just how relevant and critical it is to our learning and knowledge acquisition.

Ron Deiter, Professor of Economics at Iowa State University argued that; 'The one main reason for using humour in the classroom is to improve student learning. The creative development and expression of humour in the classroom deals with 'how' to teach, not 'what' to teach. The use of humour should be a teaching tool that, if effective, will increase the amount of 'what' is taught that is actually learned by students.'

He goes on to show the positive effects of humour, presenting several factors which add to the value of humour in the classroom including breaking down barriers between student and teacher, assisting students to retain information, making classes enjoyable and generates a far less stressful environment. Also it is simply much more fun and enjoyable for teachers.

Face-to-face teaching lends itself to the inclusion of humour. It is a dynamic, active, organic and challenging environment. A good session will encompass humour like an electrical storm, flashing and firing in all directions. A word, a look, an action between student and teacher is exciting, rewarding and an adrenaline hit for the teacher. As author Gail Godwin says; 'good teaching is one-fourth preparation and three-fourths theatre.'

It is of course alive, immediate and often unpredictable. A good teacher can instantly gage the mood, their student's response to their actions and adjust accordingly. Class dynamics are unique, the same expression or idiosyncratic comment can explode into laughter with one group and flop in another. Mistakes or misinterpretation can be addressed and dealt with on the spot.

Of the personal dimensions of teaching, humour is the most human of them all. Teachers who value humour, who not only tolerate laughter and fun in their classrooms, but even invite them in and encourage them to stay, are perceived by students as being more interesting and relevant than those who appear grim and humourless (Kottler & Zehm, 2000: 16).

Not so with online teaching. This environment, by its very nature, is constrained: it is a harsh, uncompromising and almost clinical teaching culture. It is technology driven, highly structured and often less than friendly for both students and staff.

However it is also remarkable in its fruition. It has opened the world of learning up to so many students who otherwise would have little or no access to learning. But in historical terms it is still in its infancy and in many ways we are still at the bumbling stage of our understanding and management of the processes involved.

Incorporation of humour is one way we can alleviate some of the perceived sterility of the online teaching environment. We also know it works and helps students to feel more relaxed, comfortable and to enjoy their learning. It does not necessarily make them learn more but a happy student is more likely to be receptive to engagement and knowledge acquisition.

This was shown clearly in a study by Anderson (2011) in which two online groups were tested using humour in their course, one active, the other control.

Their results were clear, 'student evaluations from the second group showed that humour positively enhanced the online learning environment…. Conclusions are drawn that humour incorporated in online courses helps motivate students to participate more in discussion and contributes to a positive learning environment.'

Of course humour has a purpose. We are not there to entertain but to teach so everything we do must in the end work toward our goal of enticing students into learning and understanding. Shatz and LoSchiavo (2006) extrapolate on this 'When deciding which material to use for the online course, we strongly encourage instructors to consider … First, does the humour promote an educational objective? Second, will the students understand and appreciate the humour? Third, is the target of the humour appropriate for the course?'

This is critical to the process. Why and how should a teacher include some sense of humour into their teaching? It is a delicate, sensitive and challenging methodology and fraught with serious dangers through misinterpretation, lack of body language and the inability to immediately correct any misunderstandings.

Smeler (2009) explores this when she states; 'The danger, of course, for both faculty and students, is misinterpretation. Many studies have shown that students in an online course tend to interpret instructors as being serious in all posted comments, often more so than the instructor intended. While students may not interpret one another with such severity, there are still problems of misinterpretation and offense being silently endured by others.'

It also takes some skill and understanding and it may well be prudent to exercise some degree of caution when introducing humour into the online teaching environment, especially for those just beginning to teach online. I have taught for many years both in class and online and it is only recently that I have taken some tentative steps in experimenting with the use of humour in my teaching with Open Universities Australia. The results have been encouraging. As one student commented; 'This is the first unit I have studied that needed a 'LOL' button :)'

In this article I have highlighted the importance of humour as an effective tool in teaching practice with specific reference to some of the issues and challenges faced by online tutors in their endeavours to integrate its use into their teaching practice. It is a valuable, unique feature in a teacher's palette of tricks and skills they can tap into as a way of engaging and communicating with students as an integral part of their learning experiences. A sentiment shared so well by actress and comedian Lily Tomlin (2003) when she said, 'I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework.' Lily Tomlin as 'Edith Ann'. •

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Lily Tomlin quotes (American Actress and Comedian. Mark Twain Prize for American Humor in 2003.b.1939)

Dr Ian Broinowski, PhD, MEd, BA(Soc Wk), BEc, Dip Teach, has worked as an advanced skills teacher at TAFE Tasmania, for many years and is currently teaching online in education with Open Universities Australia at Curtin University. Ian has a background in Economics, Social Work and Education and taught in a wide range of subjects including aged care, disability services, children's services, community and youth work Ian completed his PHD at the University of South Australia in which he examined the relationship between enchantment, imagination and creativity, and the quality of the work of the early childhood educator. Ian was a awarded the Jean Denton national scholarship in 2001.

Australian teens light years ahead in digital literacy

New Research from the OECD shows Australian students have significantly higher digital reading literacy than most other OECD countries, yet an equity gap remains.

Reading and interpreting digital texts is an increasingly necessary skill for our young people, with new and different skills required to those used to read the printed word. While many types of reading is still done using printed materials, others are specific to the electronic medium; reading and comprehending search engine results, a personal blog or an online job application form require different comprehension processes.

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), has been measuring the digital reading literacy of 15 year olds since 2005, and the most recent results from 2009 have now been reported, with Australian students outperformed by only one country, Korea, in digital reading literacy. Australia achieved a mean score of 537 score points in digital reading literacy, significantly above the OECD average of 499 points, with 17 per cent of Australian students ranked as highly skilled digital readers (Level 5 or above), compared to eight per cent of students across the OECD.

Australia and eighteen other countries participated in the assessment, which measures the ability to read, understand and apply digital texts. The results for Australia as a whole are reported, as well as comparisons to the other nations that took part in the study. Results are also reported for the Australian states and territories and for different social groups within Australia.

Digital is different

PISA defines reading literacy as 'understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.' This applies to both digital and traditional formats. The differences come down to the more 'macro-aspects' of reading 'such as accessing texts of interest, integrating information across texts, or evaluating texts for quality and credibility.'

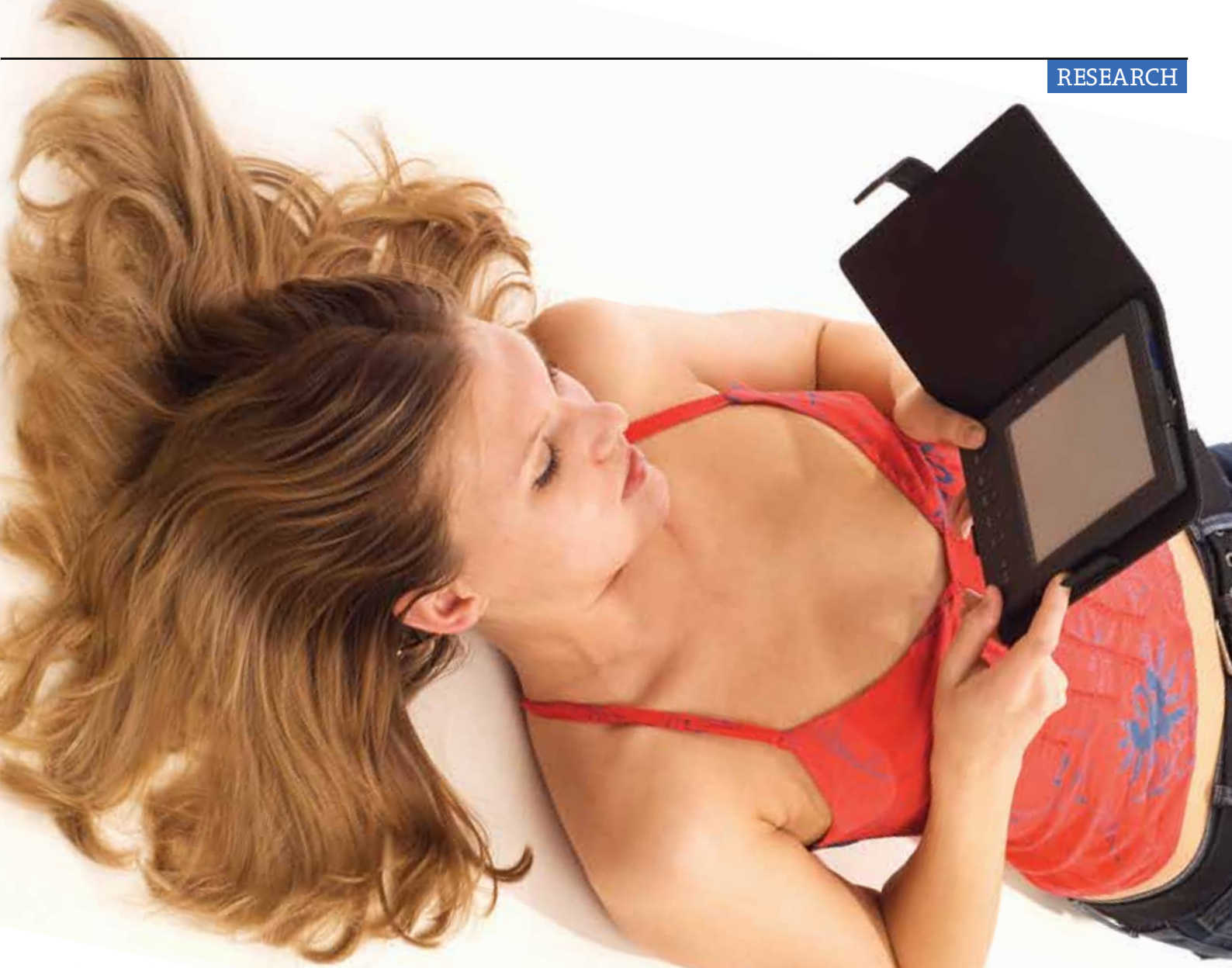
Despite these differences, the assessment results show that student performance in print and digital reading literacy was closely related. 'Generally, countries that were high performers in print reading literacy performed more strongly in digital than print reading literacy. The lower achieving countries in print reading literacy were also the lower performers in digital reading literacy; however, they performed more strongly in print than digital reading literacy. Australian students performed, on average, 22 score points higher on digital than print reading literacy.'

This may not surprise educators who have seen the rate of computer usage growing at an exponential rate, with the introduction of the micro computer 30 years ago to the readily available mobile technologies now available. These technologies affect the very nature of reading and writing, changing the way today's students engage with a text, with students in every state performed significantly better in digital than print reading literacy.

ICT familiarity

Students were also asked about their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) familiarity - an optional component of the PISA student questionnaire. Students provided information on how often they used a computer, and what type of computer they used at home and at school, their attitudes towards using a computer and their self-confidence in computer use and technical proficiency.

Ninety-nine per cent of Australian students reported having a computer at home, of which 95 per cent were connected to the Internet. A computer in the home was positively correlated to digital reading literacy – in fact students with three or more computers at home



had significantly higher scores than students with one computer in the home. While this cannot be directly tied to socioeconomic differences, the report concludes that 'students in families with a single computer may have to compete for access to the computer, and their time using it might be quite limited, whilst students in families with multiple computers are likely to have greater access and thus more experience with computers.'

Availability and usage of a computer in the home were significantly higher for students in Catholic or independent schools; students in metropolitan schools than provincial schools, who were significantly higher than students in remote schools; non-Indigenous students and students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Students from government schools reported significantly less frequent use of computers at home for school-related activities and performing online reading activities than students from Catholic schools and independent schools.

Tasmanian students stood out for their low usage of computers at home. The frequency of computer use at home for both leisure and school-related activities was lowest in Tasmania, as was the frequency of online reading activities. By contrast, the frequency of computer use at school was highest in Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

High achieving but low-equity

While we may be proud of these results, significant inequity is evident in all the usual places. Students attending schools in metropolitan and provincial areas performed significantly better than students in provincial or remote schools. Students who spoke English as their main language at home achieved at a significantly higher level than students whose main language at home was a language other than English. Non-Indigenous students out-performed Indigenous students and students in higher socioeconomic quartiles achieved significantly better than students in lower socioeconomic quartiles.

Signs of a multi-tiered school system also emerged. The average digital reading literacy performance of students in the independent school sector was significantly better than students in the Catholic school sector, who in turn scored significantly better than students in the government school sector. Computer usage at school was also assessed, with access to the Internet at school significantly higher for students in Catholic and independent schools; students in provincial schools, non-Indigenous students and students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

The PISA digital reading literacy study will take place again this year, with further leaps and bounds in student engagement with ICT expected. It can only be hoped the results for 2012 show a narrowing of this equity gap. •

The report *Preparing Australian Students for the Digital World: Results from the PISA 2009 Digital Reading Literacy Assessment*, by Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Head of Educational Monitoring and Research, Dr Sue Thomson, and ACER Research Fellow, Lisa De Bortoli, can be downloaded from www.acer.edu.au/documents/PISA2009_PreparingAustralianStudentsForTheDigitalWorld.pdf

Report summarised for Professional Educator by Jesse Dean, Policy Research Officer in ACE National Office.

Member Profile
Norman McCulla

Dr Norman McCulla FACE, Director of the postgraduate Educational Leadership Program at the School of Education, Macquarie University, is the 2012 recipient of ACE's Wyndham Medal, the highest award of the College's NSW branch. The medal has been awarded in recognition of Norman's considerable achievements and contributions to Australian education and scholarship.

Norman's career has been characterised by a demonstration of leadership at all levels at which he has worked from classroom teacher to senior educational administrator. It is underpinned by his passion for literacy development; for supporting teachers at all stages, in their professional learning; and for the work of professional associations. He has influenced the working lives of thousands of teachers.

'There is a stage in your professional career where you feel that to help stay on top of classroom teaching, you decide to become a member of a professional association that is relevant to you. For me, as a primary teacher, it was the Primary English Teachers Association (PETA) where I spent five exciting years on the executive as the association grew from humble beginnings to a large national membership,' Norman says.

'Then comes another stage in your career where you want to think about education more broadly and across sectors. It was then a logical step for me to join ACE.'

Wanting to be 'more than just a member at the mailbox of the College,' Norman became active in ACE locally, first joining the Kuring-gai regional group where he was heavily involved in local initiatives of the College. From there he was nominated for the state committee and later served as president of the NSW Branch representing NSW on the National Council for five years.

'This was an incredibly rich learning experience working alongside people such as Barry McGaw, Jill Maling and a number of great Australian educational leaders,' Norman says of his time on National Council.

In 2000 Norman convened the program for the College's international conference. Keynote speakers included representatives from UNESCO, OECD and the World Bank who discussed major issues in education for the new millennium.

Norman was also instrumental in the establishment of the NSW Quality Teaching Award, a collaboration of the NSW Minister for Education, NSW Branch of ACE and the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper. Norman served on the steering committee for over eleven years undertaking a number of research projects related to the award and being Chair from 2008-2011. The award has recognised over 450 teachers. Norman is currently a member of ACE's publications committee.

Norman sees the issues of centralisation and devolution in Australian education as central issues in the policy debate he hopes to see ACE take part in.

'This is a really fascinating time in policy in Australian education and a tipping point with regard to constructing a preferred future for the education of our young people. We are seeing centralisation of curriculum, testing, professional standards for teachers and structures for career path development in a framework that continues to promote free choice and markets in education and which is also underpinned by increased moves to local management of schools. These trends are not without their issues and challenges if our primary goal is to truly develop the entire human capital among all of our young people and our national economic prosperity', Norman says

'It is important in this mix that we maintain a healthy level of discussion and debate on the trends and their likely outcomes. It seems axiomatic, for instance, that any regulating structures genuinely

I see the College's role as to highlight issues, advocate on directions on student learning and the welfare of teachers and the overall education profession. We can inform policy debate in a way that only a professional association such as ACE can.

support development of teachers and encouragement of each other rather than simply acting as surveillance and measurement mechanisms that isolate teachers and ignore the day-to-day realities of teachers' lives.'

Describing the Wyndham Medal as 'an almost unspeakable honour,' Norman says he has been able to play a number of roles in his career that have been ' always interesting and unbelievably worthwhile' and made education a very rewarding profession to be part of. 'It truly is a profession centred on relationships. To be recognised by your own peers for a value-added contribution across the span of your career is an enormous honour,' Norman says of being awarded the Wyndham Medal.

'Having said that, in accepting it, I'm very mindful of, and grateful to, the people who have been mentors to me throughout my career through their professionalism, dedication, and personal encouragement and support. A bit of each of them rubs off on you, which is recognition in itself of the richness of the collaboration that exists in the education profession. Such mentoring is also the essence of the teacher-student relationship'. •

The 2012 ACE

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Sydney – 28th August | Macquarie University | 6.30-8.30pm
Panellists: Greens Education Spokesperson - **John Kaye**, Principal of Wenona School - **Dr Briony Scott**, Pre service teacher - **Bethany Wiltshire**, CEO TAFE Directors Australia - **Martin Riordan**, Deputy Head of the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University - **Dr Peter Whiteman**

Brisbane – 4th September | Clairvaux Mackillop College, Upper Mt Gravatt
Panellists: Executive member of the Queensland Teachers Union and AEU – **Kevin Bates**, Deputy Principal – Curriculum, Loretto College, **Pat Elsworthy**

Education for the future: The role of performance management in maintaining teacher excellence.

Speakers include key representatives from teacher advocacy groups, educational institutions, business and community. The facilitator will be Madonna King.

Victoria - 29th August | Holmesglen TAFE, Chadstone | 6.00-8.00pm
Panellists: Principal Research Fellow, Teaching, Learning & Transitions at ACER – **Dr Lawrence Ingvarson**, Director, Teaching and Learning and Education Services, Independent Schools Victoria - **Aine Maher**, Victorian President, Australian Education Union – **Mary Bluett**, President, Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals - **Frank Sal**, Assistant Director Curriculum & Innovation at Catholic Education Office, Melbourne - **Dr Mary Oski**

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Drinks and light refreshments will be served following the debates to allow for networking and to encourage further discussion among guests and participants.

ACE news

College archivist nominated for media award

Congratulations to College Archivist Tony Ryan and his colleagues from PBA FM Adelaide on being a finalist in the 2012 World Environment Day Awards. The awards were announced at a presentation dinner in Melbourne on June 8.

PBA FM was nominated for a media award for best environmental reporting for the 12-part Park Friends series on radio and internet. PBA FM was nominated alongside Stefan Armbruster, SBS Radio and Television News for his 'Time and Tide' story and eventual winner, ABC TV's Foreign Correspondent program for its 'Sumatra – Paper/Tiger' report.

More information about the Park Friends project is available from http://parkfriends.com.au/

Vale Jack Keating

ACE wishes to express sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Professor Jack Keating FACE, who passed away on 21 July.

Professor Keating was a specialist in post-compulsory education and training, most noted for his significant contribution to education policy and debates, including the Kirby and Gonski Reviews. Jack was highly respected nationally and internationally as an education researcher, as shown by the fact that he was Chief Investigator on four current Australian Research Council grants.

He was made a Fellow of ACE in 2007 in recognition of 'more than twenty five years of sustained and pivotal contribution to the reform of senior secondary education in Victoria and beyond, focusing on the provision of valued and valuable pathways for all students.'

ACE Gippsland president named Teacher Educator of the Year

Congratulations to Dr Margaret Plunkett, ACE Gippsland regional president, on being named the 2012 ATEA/Pearson Teacher Educator of the Year. Margaret, who is a Senior Lecturer in both primary and secondary school education at Monash University's Gippsland campus, was formally announced as the award recipient at the ATEA conference held in Adelaide earlier this month.

The aim of the award, which was established in 2006, is to encourage and recognise innovative teaching practices in teacher education at a university level. Each year nominations are accepted from university level teacher educators, whose primary activity is teaching education students. The ATEA/Pearson Teacher Educator of the Year Award is judged by members of the ATEA executive committee.

Public Service Medal

Congratulations to Dr Philip Lambert FACE on being awarded a Public Service Medal in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours. Phillip was awarded for 'outstanding public service to education in New South Wales.' Phillip was made a Fellow of ACE in 2008.

Nominations invited for ACE Fellowship awards

Fellowship is one of the highest honours that the College can bestow, and should be seen by College Members and Fellows, and by the wider education community, as recognition of outstanding and distinctive contributions to the advancement of education. The College Board awards Fellowships on the recommendation of its National Awards Committee following a thorough nomination and review process.

Enquiries about the nomination process should be directed to the chair of your state/territory awards committee. Further information and documentation on how to nominate a peer for Fellowship of ACE is available from the Awards section of the College website at http://austcolled.com.au/award/fellowship-face

ACE events

ACE Breakfast with Valerie Hannon, Director Innovation Unit, London, UK

Region: Adelaide, SA
Date: 30 August
Close registrations: 27 August
Price: Members $40 Non-members $45

Educating children and young people who are connected in their 21st Century world is a challenge at all levels of the education system. How do we respond the challenge? Stick with what we have and improve it, or think and act differently? Valerie Hannon will build the case for transformative change.

For further information on any ACE events please visit www.austcolled.com.au

Victorian Branch Gala Dinner 2012

Region: Victoria
Date: 7 September
Close registrations: 31 August
Price: Members $90 Non-members $100

This is the Victorian Branch's premier occasion to recognise the contribution of various Victorian members through presentation of Fellowships and the 2012 Sir James Darling Medal. The annual Educational Media Award will also be announced. Guest speaker Mr John Marsden, author and Founding Principal of Candlebark School will deliver the Victorian Branch Oration on *Charles Dickens where are you? Schooling in the 21st century*

Forum: Where are we now? The Australian Curriculum with seconds to go...

Region: The Hills/Parramatta, NSW
Date: 12 September
Close registrations: 7 September
Price: Members $10 Non-members $15

Forum presenters include Carol Taylor, NSW Board of Studies; Greg Pryor, Department of Education and Training; Christine Del Gallo, Secondary Principals' Council; and Greg Whitby, Catholic Education (Parramatta). Each speaker will give a brief presentation followed by questions from the floor and summing up. Refreshments will be served.

Education on the Square

Region: Adelaide, SA
Date: 19 September, 5.30-6.30pm
Close registrations: 19 September

Education on the Square aims to promote discussion about relevant and current themes within the education sector of South Australia. Each session provides professional input on a topical educational issue followed by opportunity for open discussion.

Len Falk memorial lecture

Region: Gippsland, Victoria
Date: 21 September
Close registrations: 17 September
Price: Members $35

The Len Falk Memorial Lecture has been held annually as a means of bringing important educational issues into the public area in Gippsland. The emphasis this year is how teachers can keep the Science focus in the area of climate change. The lecture will be presented by Professor Will Steffen, Climate Commissioner.

ACE directory

Australian College of Educators

ACE is dedicated to providing an independent voice for educators and advancing the education profession. ACE provides the forum in which educators can inform themselves; discuss and debate issues; and seek to find shared solutions to current educational questions.

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Chief Executive Officer
..... Catherine Pickett
Publications and Communications
..... Louise Reynolds
Member Services & Events ..... Meaghan Flynn
EA & Branch Support ..... Karrine Sleiman
Policy Research ..... Jesse Dean

Membership

Provides you with an opportunity to connect with a diverse and vibrant community of education practice with a goal to ensure the profession is respected and valued.

Membership is open to teachers, researchers, principals, leaders, administrators and others with appropriate qualifications and experience.

ACE represents educators working in early learning, primary, secondary, tertiary and higher education as well as VET across all sectors of Australian education.

Value of membership

Have a say in policy and procedures that impact on your profession by joining the only Australian professional association representing educators across all sectors and levels of education.

- Contribute to the sector's primary advocacy body for the profession of teaching.
- Attend our events and conference and converse with cutting edge presenters.
- Have access to the ACE website for news and articles relevant to the profession.
- Receive our professional journal, *Professional Educator*, eight times per year.
- Receive a free copy of *Education Review* eight times per year.
- Gain the right to use the letters MACE as a recognised, professional post-nominal
- Be eligible to receive regional, state/territory ACE awards as well as the highly valued Fellowship award.

Full details and online application form www.austcolled.com.au

Welcome to our new members

Mr Andrew George Alexander, VIC, MACE
Mr Richard Baird, WA, MACE
Mrs Deborah Bassingthwaighte, QLD, MACE
Ms Kerri Batch, VIC, MACE
Mrs Bernadette Beasley, QLD, MACE
Ms Deborah Brown, NSW, MACE
Mrs Susan Carter, QLD, MACE
Dr Richard Courtice, QLD, MACE
Ms Assunta Di Gregorio, NSW, MACE
Mrs Gretel Diluca, QLD, MACE
Ms Joyce Dinan, SA, MACE
Mr Peter Donkin, QLD, MACE
Dr Rachel Franks, NSW, MACE
Mrs Heather Frewin, NSW, MACE
Ms Lisa Gatliff, VIC, MACE
Mr Peter Green, NSW, MACE
Mr Ian Hamilton, QLD, MACE
Mr Lee Bruce Herden, NSW, MACE
Mrs Margaret Horton, VIC, MACE
Mr Asif Iqbal, VIC, MACE
Mrs Margaret Jacobsen, NSW, MACE
Mr John Konopka, SA, MACE
Mrs Helen Lee, NSW, MACE
Mrs Angela Leyden, NSW, MACE
Mrs Heather Little John, VIC, MACE
Ms Barbara McCarthy, QLD, MACE
Mr John Milliss, Indonesia, MACE
Ms Angelique Morin, WA, MACE
Mr Peter Nicholls, NSW, MACE
Dr Kate O'Brien, NSW, MACE
Dr John Paterson, NSW, MACE
Mr Nathanael Reinertsen, WA, MACE
Mr Stewart Ross, NSW, MACE
Dr Marion Shields, NSW, MACE
Dr Anna Sullivan, SA, MACE
Ms Fiona Taber, NSW, MACE
Mr Patrick Todhunter, QLD, MACE
Dr Darius von Guettner, VIC, MACE
Dr Derris Wood, TAS, MACE
Mr Warrick Wynn, VIC, MACE
The Reverend Roger Zohrab, NSW, MACE